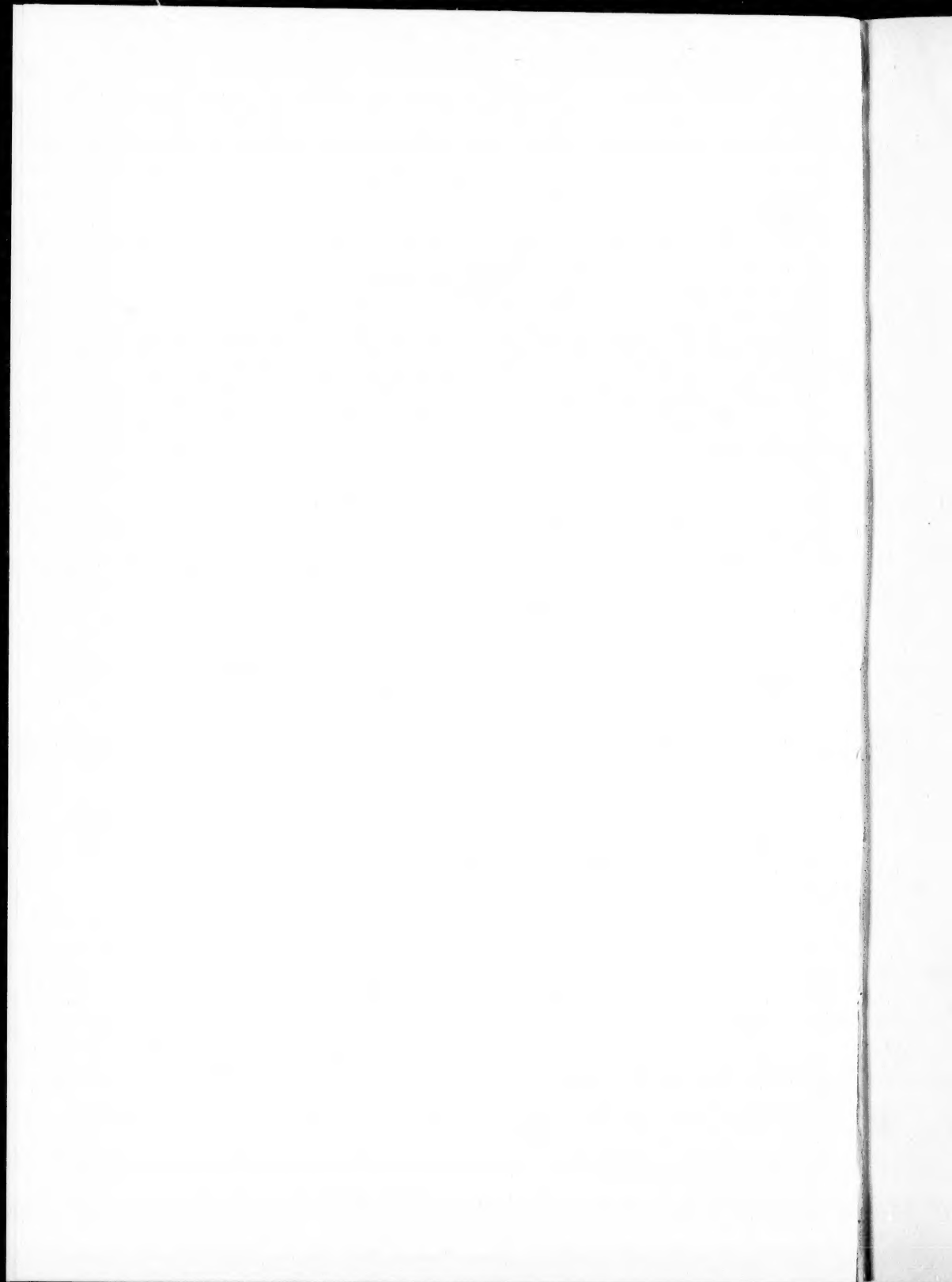




MONTREAL A FREE PORT.

STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREW ROBERTSON

Submitted to the Harbour Commissioners 13th May, 1880.

GENTLEMEN,—It has been customary that all the statements made by the Chairman have been submitted to the Board before being delivered to the general public. How this custom was introduced, or what purpose it was intended to serve, I do not profess to know. I have, however, followed strictly the same rule up to this point, but on the present occasion I intend, with your leave, to ask your indulgence in what I am now going to say, and that I personally accept the entire responsibility therefor. It is my intention to reply to the varied statements which have lately been made in connection with the Trust, by individuals and through the press.

Let me first refer to the question and meaning of what has been termed

A FREE PORT.

I have been criticised for asking that the term "Free Port" should be defined. My object in doing so at the meeting of the Board of Trade was not to put any obstruction in the way of the port becoming free, but that it was causing conflicting ideas in the minds of many people. A free port has been stated by some to be a free port for ships—that is to say, ships are not to pay tonnage dues. Others maintain that a free port means no dues on ships or their cargoes, but everything to pass free.

I think in looking at this question the present position of the Trust should be considered. In doing this, let me

say that the Government in 1841 began the channel operations as a public work, when, after having spent the sum of \$300,000, the work was abandoned.

The Harbour Commissioners took up the work in 1851, and expended \$1,200,000 in improving the channel to 20 feet, so called, in 1860. The Government assumed \$900,000 of the cost of the work to that time. The balance, about \$300,000, expended from that time to 1865, yet stands to the debit of the account.

In 1873 an Act was passed which authorized the Department of Public Works to proceed with the further deepening, under arrangement with the Harbour Commission, at a cost not exceeding \$1,500,000. Of this amount about \$1,250,000 has been so far expended. Assuming, therefore, that the channel will be completed at the estimated cost, this will give \$3,000,000 as the total amount to be expended. Of this sum of three millions, \$1,200,000 has been paid by the Government, leaving \$1,800,000 as a debt on the Trust. It is this sum which the Harbour Commission have been urging should be assumed by the Government as having been expended on one of the public works of the Dominion.

The Harbour proper means the Harbour within the limits of the City of Montreal, and it has cost very nearly, if not quite, as much more, say \$3,000,000. Of this sum there is a debt of \$1,800,000 in bonds issued by the Harbour Commissioners themselves, and for which the Trust is solely responsible for principle and interest, the difference between the amount of cost and debt now owing having been defrayed by the surplus revenues of the port over a long series of years.

When the channel is completed to 25 feet, the interest on the outlay, including the \$300,000, at debit of 20-foot channel, will be, at 5 per cent..... \$90,000
Sinking Fund as required by law 15,000
Interest required for Harbour Bonds..... 100,000
Estimated cost of Harbour maintenance..... 75,000

Making..... \$280,000

as the annual charge necessary to maintain the Trust without any provision for further extensions, and improvements, which necessity or time may show to be requisite.

It has been suggested that when the Government relieves the Trust of the obligation incurred for the channel debt, that the tonnage dues should be entirely abolished. I would suggest, before doing so, that some consideration should be given to see, if by a reduction on certain classes of through goods, which we are not now, or are, in very small quantities bringing to the port, they could not be encouraged; and if this course would not prove practically more beneficial to the vessels themselves than by entirely freeing them from tonnage dues.

It has also been suggested that the city should assume the debt and maintenance of the harbour. It will thus be seen that the city will have to assume a liability of \$175,000 per annum to make Montreal a truly Free port.

Before leaving this subject, I think it would be only proper to state that Montreal does not ask one cent for any expenditure for her harbour proper, as I find many people are under the impression that Montreal is demanding from the Government the entire debt of both river and lake improvements as well as the harbour debt. All we ask is, that what has been expended on the deepening of the channel in lake and river, which we consider as much a Dominion work as the canal and railway expenditures.

For her harbour proper Montreal, so far as I am aware, has never received one cent for harbour purposes, while since Confederation, it will be found by the Public Accounts, that in Ontario alone for harbour purposes about one and a half millions has been expended for purely local harbours in that Province. To our Quebec friends let me say that we do not ask, as they have for the Harbour of Quebec, the Government guarantee for the

Harbour of Montreal, by which they get from the Government the money they require at 5 per cent., while Montreal is paying at the present moment from 6 to 7½ per cent. for bonds now in existence; and perhaps I may be pardoned for saying in this connection that I have just successfully floated a loan of \$100,000 at par for the Harbour of Montreal at 5 per cent. for thirty years—the most successful financial operation yet done, and which, when required, I hope to be able to repeat at a similar rate.

Montreal only gets from the Government the money for the lake and river improvements at 5 per cent. Her Harbour improvements are entirely at her own cost for principal and interest.

The *Herald* says:—"Mr. Esdaile properly expressed his surprise at the inaction of the Board." I accept this as personal to myself, because, as Chairman, I am no doubt expected to see that the work is properly attended to. In order, therefore, to show what has been done, allow me to refer back to the date of my appointment, at the end of June last.

When the late Chairman, Mr. Cramp, was superseded, he mentioned that there were three important subjects left for me to deal with, viz., the Grand Trunk Railway track on the wharves, the Q. M. & O. right of way to Quebec Gate Barracks, and the allowance to Mrs. Young.

The last question has been settled, as I believe, satisfactorily to those more immediately interested, and I am glad to say that the Government of the day were magnanimous enough after Mr. Young's death to recognise the services of probably one of the strongest opponents they ever had.

The Joly Administration fell, and consequently, for the time being, settled the Q. M. & O. question; while the Grand Trunk question is receiving my most anxious consideration, and is in a fair way of solution.

After the meeting of the Board of Trade held in January last, on the 6th of February thereafter I was waited upon by a deputation of that Board to deal with the questions of towage and pilotage. Some very strong remarks on towage had been made at that meeting, to which I will hereafter allude. After a long interview with the deputation, consisting of the President, Mr. Henshaw, Messrs. White and Adams, I ventured the suggestion that, as we had no power to deal with towage, we might assist port of call vessels, say under 800 tons, by reducing or abolishing their tonnage dues, which I think met with their approval. On leaving, I asked them to embody their views in a letter, which I received under date of 9th of that month.

Their suggestions were briefly as follows :—

1. To ask the Tug Boat Companies to frame a tariff on the minimum of last year's rates.
2. To ask for power to build tugs to be worked by the Commissioners, or by a company.
3. Pilotage.—That tugs should carry a licensed pilot, and vessels in tow should not require to carry one.

After considerable and careful enquiry as to the pilotage question, I have, so far, been unable to get experts to agree on a solution of the question.

As to the towage, I had anticipated their wish, in so far as getting the tug boat owners to try and frame a reduced tariff from that published in 1874, by commencing a correspondence in September last year, which ended in March this year, and I can refer you to my remarks at the annual meeting of the Commissioners, when it was conclusively shown that the tug boat owners had not been receiving over one-third of their published tariff of 1874 for the years 1878 and 1879, and which rate was considered totally inadequate to meet expenses.

I did not personally approve of the owning or subsidizing of tug boats by the Commissioners. The least

objectionable mode suggested, viz., that of subsidy, was adopted by the Board.

I have, however, succeeded in inducing the Beaver Line to publish a tariff at one-half of the rates existing in 1874, but who say that it depends entirely on the amount of vessels towed whether that rate can be maintained; if there is an increase of sailing vessels, they can probably reduce the rates; if their tugs are not constantly employed, they cannot afford to do it at the rates published. The trade and the port is much indebted to this company for their action.

Meantime I had obtained a return of all the sailing vessels and dues paid by them for 1879, and finding that the total sum received was \$16,411, I then proposed that *all* ocean sailing vessels should be made free of tonnage dues, and a bill was prepared asking power to frame a tariff for towage, and with power to grant a subsidy, as also special power to abolish or reduce the tonnage dues on all ocean sailing vessels. This bill was duly forwarded, on 11th March, to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and it was understood by me at that time that there would probably be little or no difficulty in passing it. Unfortunately this was not the case, and the bill has been dropped, excepting one clause referring to the trial of pilots, which simply limits the quorum to three members of the Commission.

Mr. Cramp says, in a letter to the *Herald* of 3rd instant, that last year's bill was sufficient to enable us to reduce the dues on sailing ships; I was of the same opinion, but our counsel thought we could not abolish the tonnage dues, therefore the clause granting power to abolish tonnage dues was inserted, in order that there might be no mistake.

In connection with the reduction of the tariff the Board have been charged by the *Herald* for insincerity in the following statement:—

“It is stated that their most recent act proves conclusively their insincerity. They adopted a tariff to take effect on 1st April, which was passed by Order-in-Council on the 19th April, and in place of reducing the dues on the number of articles taxed, the list has been increased by some 46; all this had been work prior to the professions of the Harbour Commissioners to assist the deputation in bringing about so much needed a reform. We publish two letters this morning on this important subject: one disposes of the plea that we require legislation (Mr. Cramp's); the other insinuating what we charge—that the Board of Trade and Corn Exchange have been hood-winked.” (Mr. Henshaw's.)

No greater misstatement could have been made than the foregoing.

The preparation of this tariff was commenced in November last, and was before the Commissioners for months. It was sent to the Governor-in-Council for approval on the 23rd day of March, and was only received completed on the 29th April, under cover of 28th, from Ottawa.

At the meeting of the Board of Trade on 6th April, the day on which it may be said the present agitation commenced, I then stated, as may be seen on the files of the *Herald* of 7th April:—“The Harbour Commissioners had simplified the tariff,—reduced it in some cases—and it had gone before the Governor-in-Council for approval.” Where, then, the insincerity?

Then we are charged with increasing the dues on forty-six articles; it is true that there may appear more articles, but that does not show an increase of tariff.

All articles unenumerated are charged one-quarter of 1 per cent. The additional enumeration only defined their class—did not add to the charge.

But so far from having increased the number, they have been reduced in number. It so happens that the tariff of 1877 had to be amended by an increase of

denomination for the Custom House, and can be seen there, why not published, I leave to the late chairman of the Board to explain.

At the meeting of the Board of Trade held on 21st January last, Mr. Cramp, when speaking of the harbour wharfage dues said :—"A very able report of the Committee of the Board of Trade took up the question and communicated with the Harbour Commissioners. The change from *ad valorem* to specific was a step in the right direction, and led to a very elaborate investigation as to the wharfage dues and goods which had been diverted, resulting in a great mass of information, which is now at the Harbour offices."

If Mr. Cramp will refer to the newspapers of January 9th, 1877, he will find that the able report referred to was made when I was President of the Board of Trade, and at the annual meeting of the Board that year I made the following remarks, which dealt with the subject as follows:

"The question of Harbour dues has also been before the Council, it having been found that the *ad valorem* rates now causing so much annoyance to the Western Importers that many were preferring the American seaports to Montreal, even when the through competitive rates were the same by both routes. The subject has been fully gone into in the report, but I may add that this is a question which deserves the careful attention of the Harbour Commissioners. During the summer season, at all events, every thing coming into Montreal or for the Western points of the Dominion should certainly come by the St. Lawrence route and through the port of Montreal.

"If not, what will be the use of the 24 feet channel, our increased Harbour accommodation, our enlarged locks, and our enormous canal expenditure, if Boston and New York can afford to send goods to Montreal, and the West, as they did during last summer, at cheaper rates than *via* the river and cost of the Harbour dues?

"The *ad valorem* system as applied to Montreal has not been any cause of trouble to the steamers and railroads, but in the through traffic it has ; it is this traffic which we ought more especially to watch and make tributary to us, when such keen competition is against us through the other ports. They (the carriers) have found great difficulty, because the consignees are compelled to pay the harbor dues at the Custom House when they pass their entries, and afterwards get themselves recouped for their outlay from the railways or steamers, as in through traffic the carriers have to pay the harbour dues in competition against their rivals.

"This fact alone is of sufficient importance, and has caused a large number of Canadian importers to order their goods through United States ports, by which this outlay and trouble of recouping is avoided.

"The carriers have also a strong cause for complaint from the fact that they carry goods by the ton-weight or measurement, while the value of the contents are unknown. In this case they never know at what rate of freight they are carrying unenumerated goods, and it is a fact that in some instances they have actually paid more for harbour dues than they received from Liverpool to the Western points of destination. By the proposal your Council have made to the Harbour Commissioners this difficulty will be remedied, viz., to charge, instead of the *ad valorem* rate on value, a specific rate by ton-weight or measurement, as may be carried on the face of the bills of lading."

This change was made by the Harbour Commissioners in 1877, and the mass of valuable information secured that year, to which Mr. Cramp has referred, was allowed to lie fallow till it fructified in the tariff which has been so much commented upon, and which has now become law.

Mr. Cramp, in a letter to the *Gazette* on the 5th instant,

criticizing an article of theirs of the previous day, of which I was entirely ignorant till it appeared, mentions his appeal to Sir Charles Tupper for the assumption of the debt, so as to be able to reduce the dues, and takes credit for having presented "the only *official* appeal yet " addressed by any Harbour Commissioners to the *present* " Government, is that which was presented by me on " behalf of my colleagues and myself."

As you are all aware, Sir Charles Tupper was at one time Minister of Public Works, including railways and canals. At the time of my appointment he went to England, and on his return I mentioned, the very first time I was in Ottawa, in October last, that the Harbour Commissioners would soon be making a demand on him for the assumption of the debt, but in conversation he stated that the time had not yet arrived, that, even were they willing to do it, the state of the finances of the country were still such as would prevent its being likely of accomplishment for some time. He at the same time mentioned Mr. Cramp and Mr. McLennan had seen him about six months previously on the subject, and that they had presented an appeal, which I then heard for the first time. I asked him for a copy, which was afterwards obtained, and is a document which deserves the highest praise, and which I cheerfully accord to Mr. Cramp and his co-Commissioners.

This statement I did not think necessary to repeat, but accepted the same as a deliverance of the Board, in which I entirely concurred, and which deserved and has obtained my warmest support, as well as that of every one of my co-Commissioners.

But while saying this much, might I ask why the *present* Government should have been favored with such an official appeal, and that the *former* Government should have been left out in the cold?

If I mistake not, Mr. Mackenzie made his statement in

August, 1877, of his approval that the lake and river debt should be a part and parcel of the public works of the Dominion. Why wait till March, 1879, nearly two years thereafter, to give this great opportunity of relief to the present Government? Would it not have looked much better if the golden opportunity had then been seized, and that Mr. Cramp had in the session of 1878 given the late Government the benefit of his information and his zeal?

Mr. Cramp further writes:—"As the result of this appeal, Sir Charles Tupper told us that he fully recognized the contention that the reduction of dues had become a necessity in order to attract increased trade, and he agreed to the legislation asked, which is now on the Statute Book, 42 Vic., chap. 28, by which provision is made to legalize such reduction. *I say, further*, that the pressure of Lake St. Peter interest was only then beginning to be seriously felt, and it would have been unwise to go before any Government for its immediate assumption as the case had previously stood."

Let me ask why he did not go in 1878 more readily than in 1879? When Mr. Cramp entered office in 1874 the surplus for that year was \$161,940; in 1875, \$101,780; 1876, \$25,695; in 1877 the lowest reached in the decade, \$18,831; and in 1878, \$24,299.

It seems to me that the situation was even more alarming in 1878 than in 1879, and it would have been still more to his credit if he had presented the document to the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, who had so far given his approval, and who was so much stronger in office; that he was at the time not only Minister of Public Works, but also the Prime Minister of the Dominion.

In view of the agitation which this subject has caused within the last month, it is refreshing to find such anxiety on the part of Mr. Cramp, now that he has no responsibility to agitate for a reduction of the dues. In the interview he had with Sir Charles Tupper, in March, 1879, as

related by himself at the Meeting of the Board of Trade, held in January last, when he, "accompanied by Mr. McLennan and the City members, the whole question " was gone into very fully and as much evidence brought " to bear that the charges must be reduced, they asked for " permission to introduce a Bill to reduce them, and they " went boldly into the matter."

The Bill for this purpose was introduced and passed; what was the result? where the boldness? what reductions were proposed? None. The Bill was safely stowed away in the pigeon-hole—why so? Because, as Mr. Cramp almost in the same breath says, "That they could not " reduce their dues and meet their obligations, unless the " Channel was assumed by the Government. *Until then* " *they could not reduce charges*, and it would be foolish to " expect a large increase of trade."

With this statement, that until the Government would assume the Channel debt, no reduction could be made; and Mr. Cramp knowing the fact that any reduction which may be proposed by the Harbour Board must be assented to by the Governor-in-Council before it can be ratified, asks me for a bold policy; and the *Herald*, with its "nod of assent from Sir Charles Tupper," seems to think because of public clamour that I am able to do exactly as they wish, or as I please.

Having now dealt with the statement that the charges could not be reduced till the Government assumed the Channel debt, let me deal with the latter part of Mr. Cramp's statement, "*It would be foolish to expect a large increase of trade.*"

This statement was made in March, 1879.

The tonnage of the Port in 1878 was 397,266 tons and that of 1879 was 506,969 tons, or an increase in one year of over 27½ per cent. Comment is unnecessary.

Now let me call your attention in this connection to the revenues and expenditures of the following years:—

	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Surplus.
1873	\$249,666	\$106,694	\$142,972
1874	281,132	119,192	161,940
Total surplus.....			\$304,812
1878	\$228,726	\$204,427	\$24,299
1879	269,596	211,511	58,085
Total surplus.....			\$82,384

Previously Mr. Cramp had been a commissioner of the Trust for about six years, when he was again made a commissioner by the late Government in March, 1874. The surplus of the year 1873, before his appointment, was, as I have already stated, \$143,000, left in the Treasury, with which he as a commissioner had to deal. In 1874, in which the surplus reached \$162,000, or over 135 per cent on the expenditure of that year, I fail to find any sign of a proposal to reduce the dues in any way, so as to induce additional traffic, or even to retain that which was then leaving us, till the subject was forced on the Harbour Commission, as already mentioned, by the Board of Trade. When done, what were the alterations? Drugs and Dry Goods were only in 1877 taken out of the *ad valorem* and put on the specific list, while any other changes were nearly, if not all, in the shape of an increase of dues. The new tariff, as now amended, is in the nature of reduction as well as of simplification.

With therefore an average surplus of over \$150,000 per annum in the years 1873-4, nothing was proposed, as against \$41,000 of surplus in the years 1878-9. The circumstances otherwise not changed, I am expected to make or propose large and radical changes which might imperil the interests of the Trust.

Now, as you have already been informed, I felt that

sailing ships were under peculiar disadvantages. I was willing, so far as I was able, to help them, and the only way in which it could be done by the Harbour Board was by the abolition of tonnage dues. This I pressed upon the Government long before the meeting of the Board of Trade on 6th April, as is evidenced by the date of the forwarding of the Bill, viz., 11th March, which dealt with this subject.

MONTREAL'S FUTURE.

We have heard, in this connection, some stories of the Heathen Chinee, of the treatment of the patient by the igneous or the aqueous system; we have had a Coffin-scare; we have had Biblical quotations; we have had the political element introduced, which I very much regret; we have had pointed out to us the one Ewe Lamb, as represented by one of our most valued commissioners; we have had ruin and decay portrayed as staring us in the face.

I confess that for some time back I have been mortified at the way the fair fame of our city and her port have been run down. It is 27 years ago since I first looked with delight on Montreal, her river and her harbour; and on the 1st of May, 1853, saw the good ship *Shandon*, I think, the first to arrive that year, which was then the pride and glory of the port. The extension and progress of the city since that time to me seems marvellous, and although we may hear of cities, like Corn-opolis, Cotton-opolis, or Pork-opolis, largely excelling us in the race of progress and in wealth,—and, while I have seen many of those great and vaunted cities of the neighbouring Republic, I always return to Montreal with a feeling of pride and satisfaction as the city of my choice, and so far have never in all these years yet regretted my connection with Montreal.

Comparisons have been made as to the comparative

receipts of grain at Montreal and the other Atlantic ports, and that Montreal is retrograding.

But it is shipments, not receipts, that should be dealt with. I regret that I have been unable to get the returns for 1879, but take 1878 and you will find that New York receipts were say 153 millions; she shipped 108, retaining 45 millions for her own consumption. Montreal receipts were 22 millions, shipments 21 millions, showing that while New York retained about 30 per cent. for her own consumption, Montreal retained only about 5 per cent.

In making any comparison, therefore, shipments only should be dealt with, as we can hardly expect to bring, *via* Montreal, what is required for New York's consumption.

Besides, it must be remembered that we are only a summer port, and that from the improved railway connections compared with ten years ago, which now enables large quantities of grain to be moved during the winter months to the American winter ports, it would be only fair to take the quantities during our season of navigation, as compared with the same time elsewhere, when a comparison is to be made.

Mr. Cramp, at the Board of Trade meeting on the 21st of January, gave a very vivid picture of the cost of towage. He said:—

“Then adverting to the towage, they had a long and expensive piece of towage, but that was not all. He had obtained from one firm a list of 20 vessels of 500 tons average, and from this he found that the average cost was \$1.45 per ton register from Quebec, which was a very serious item, and came to 9d. or 10d. per quarter on grain.”

This was to me a very alarming statement. As already stated, I had begun a correspondence with the tug owners in September last year; let me give you an extract from

the first letter received on the subject, dated 29th September, 1879 :

“ The towage has been for three years too low in most cases, but still there were captains who paid extortion-ate rates ; some of them did it to get discounts on the bill ; others, being strangers and ignorant about tariffs, paid too much ; but now they seem to be well posted, and not half a dozen vessels this year have paid tariff, although mostly towed from below Father Point, in fact, as far down as Seven Islands.”

Knowing this fact, I was exceedingly surprised at the statement made by Mr. Cramp and remained silent, but during my investigation on the subject I was furnished by the firm mentioned with the data on which Mr. Cramp's statement was founded.

I imagined when the statement was made, as I am sure his hearers generally supposed, that he was dealing with the previous year. But what was the actual fact ? He was dealing with the years 1874-5, five and six years ago, which had no bearing whatever on the charges made for the last three years, '77, '78 and '79, which the tug proprietors say have been ruinous for them.

Let me now read to you an extract of a letter, received 16th March last, closing the correspondence, which will show that I have done all in my power to get the tug owners of Quebec to make such a reasonable tariff as they could afford :

“ Your welcome letter of the 12th March, 1880, was received yesterday, and I will be well repaid for all the letters written to yourself and others interested in the trade of Montreal, if I have convinced you that the rate of towage for the last three years have, on an average, been below a legitimate paying basis, and that a great deal has been said and written in Montreal about the high rate of towage had no good foundation. *This, however, does not do away with your chief objection of having*

" *a tariff in existence that is admittedly too high*, which gives
 " an opportunity of sharks to catch a very few gudgeons in
 " the course of a season ; but from the disorganized state
 " of most of the steamboat owners, and more particularly
 " of the Tow Boat Company, which is still in a state of
 " doubt and uncertainty of what they are going to do,
 " that it will be impossible to come at present to any
 " agreement whatever."

We have got so accustomed to decrying our Port that few people realize the great stride we have made in the last three decades, as will be evidenced from the following figures. The Ocean tonnage arriving in the Port for the following years was, in

1849	37,703 tons.
1859	94,660 "
1869	259,863 "
1879	506,969 "

Great stress has been laid on the bringing of a certain class of sea-going vessels, say port-of-call vessels, of moderate tonnage, to the port. No one can be more anxious than I am, or have been, to secure an increase to this trade. I showed in the statement made at the annual meeting of the Trust in February, that last year no less than 45 vessels came to the port, many of them of this class, which brought sugar cargoes, which would not have come to Montreal without the change which was made in the fiscal policy of the country last session. If vessels of this kind can get fair cargoes both ways, more no doubt will come, and if it were possible that we could by act of Parliament, thaw out the St. Lawrence, and have our noble river open, as it is to-day, all the year round, even with all its disadvantages of towage and pilotage, it would be second to none on this continent, but as that cannot be, let us make the most of our opportunities, and take comfort that the *march and improvement of steam communication is Montreal's future*. In support of this view,

take the tonnage into the ports of Great Britain in 1874. Sailing ships were 24,250,049 tons; in 1878 they were 24,497,279 tons; increase about 1 %. Steamers, in 1874, were 29,966,914 tons, and in 1878 39,996,735 tons, an increase of over 33½ per cent. in five years. To show that this change is still growing, take the tonnage to the north-east ports of England, of which Newcastle is the chief. The tonnage of sailing vessels decreased 55,417 tons, while steamers increased 51,298 tons in the year 1879; and a very similar result may be expected when the full returns are obtained for the whole kingdom.

In so far as sailing vessels are concerned, towage is against us, and I confess that I cannot see that any legislation can help us. It has been objected by some that we should not relieve sailing ships of tonnage dues without reducing steamers, how much more strong would the argument be if we had the law passed which would enable the Commissioners to grant a subsidy for towage, and they had done so, taking money from the steamers to enable sailing ships to compete with them in the market.

Mr. Cramp has stated, and no one being in the business ought to know better, that in all other cases except towage, the port of Montreal would compare favorably with any other American port.

Mr. McLennan has used similar language.

I quite coincide in their views, and will go further and state that once the Government has assumed the debt for the lake and river improvements, I believe that Montreal during the season of navigation will not only be equal to, but for steamers, can be made superior to any of the great ports of New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Baltimore.

I regret, gentlemen, that I should have detained you so long. There are some other points which I might have touched upon, but I think that what I have now said will be considered sufficient for the present, in rebuttal of the statements which have been made.

I will only add that there are six different classes of craft in the Harbour, which may be enumerated as follows :

1. Ocean Steamers.
2. Sailing Vessels.
3. Inland Steamers or Propellers.
4. Inland Sailing Vessels and Barges.
5. River and Ferry Craft.
6. Elevators.

All of which are interested in the reduction of dues.

It is probably unfortunate for myself, but it will perhaps be considered fortunate, in so far as my connection with this Trust is concerned, that I do not own one single cent in any of these large and varied interests.

I have already spoken to you of the city of my choice, as also my warmest interest in its future, and I think that I can confidently appeal to every one of my colleagues on the Commission, since they did me the honour of electing me to the chair, that there has been no lack of zeal on my part to secure for the City of Montreal her just demand, viz., that the deepening of the Channel should be assumed by the Government as one of the public works of the Dominion, and that every effort should be used to facilitate the time when we shall be able to declare Montreal Harbour a

TRULY FREE PORT.